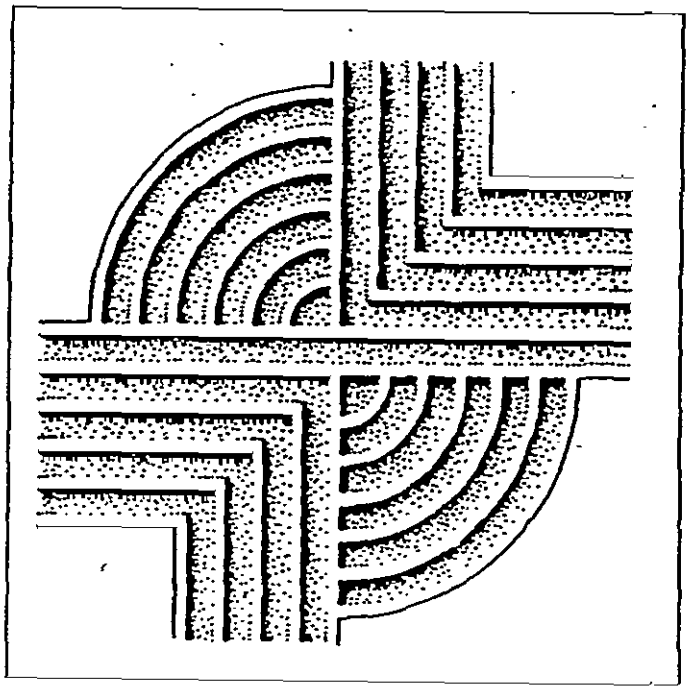
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE SANTEE COOPER RED BLUFF-LITTLE RIVER TRANSMISSION LINE, HORRY COUNTY, SOUTH CAROLINA



RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 69

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Prepared For:
Mr. Fredrick Sanford
South Carolina Public Service Authority
P.O. Box 398
Moncks Corner, South Carolina 29461

Prepared By:

Natalie Adams
Michael Trinkley

Chicora Research Contribution 69

CHICORA FOUNDATION, INC.
P.O. Box 8664 • 861 Arbutus Drive
Columbia, South Carolina 29202
(803) 787-6910

Introduction

This investigation was conducted by Ms. Natalie Adams of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for Mr. Fredrick E. Sanford of Santee-Cooper. The 30 to 100 feet wide 22.5 mile long corridor is located in northern Horry County. The corridor begins at the Red Bluff substation, running roughly north until it crosses Hwy. 772, then bears west and runs to the Little River substation (Figure 1).

The corridor follows an existing transmission line from the Red Bluff station to Simpson Creek. Beyond this point, vegetation consists of mixed hardwood/pine forest alternating with planted pine, fallow agricultural fields, wetlands and swamps. The Waccamaw River bisects the corridor as well as several creeks (eg. Buck Creek).

The corridor is intended to be used as a power line right of way. Some landscape alteration has already occurred through the placement of powerline poles from the Red Bluff substation to South Carolina Highway 554. This has caused considerable damage to the ground surface in that area. Planned improvements consist of the placement of triple wooden power line poles through the corridor at variable distances. Each pole will require an excavation of about 2 feet in diameter.

The proposed project was reviewed by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and an intensive archaeological survey was recommended. Chicora was requested to submit a budgetary proposal for such a survey by Mr. Fredrick E. Sanford of Santee-Cooper. A proposal was submitted on July 9, 1991 and the work was approved on July 11, 1991.

This study is intended to provide a detailed explanation of the archaeological survey of the Santee-Cooper powerline corridor and the findings. The statewide archaeological site files held by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology were examined for information pertinent to the project area. The field investigations were conducted July 16 through July 23, 1991 by Ms. Natalie Adams, Ms. Mona Grunden, and Ms. Darwin Ramsey-Styer. This field work involved 96 person hours. Laboratory and report production were conducted at Chicora's laboratories in Columbia, South Carolina on August 6, 1991.

Effective Environment

Horry County is bounded to the north by Brunswick and Columbus Counties, North Carolina, to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, to the south by Georgetown County, and to the west by Dillon and Marion

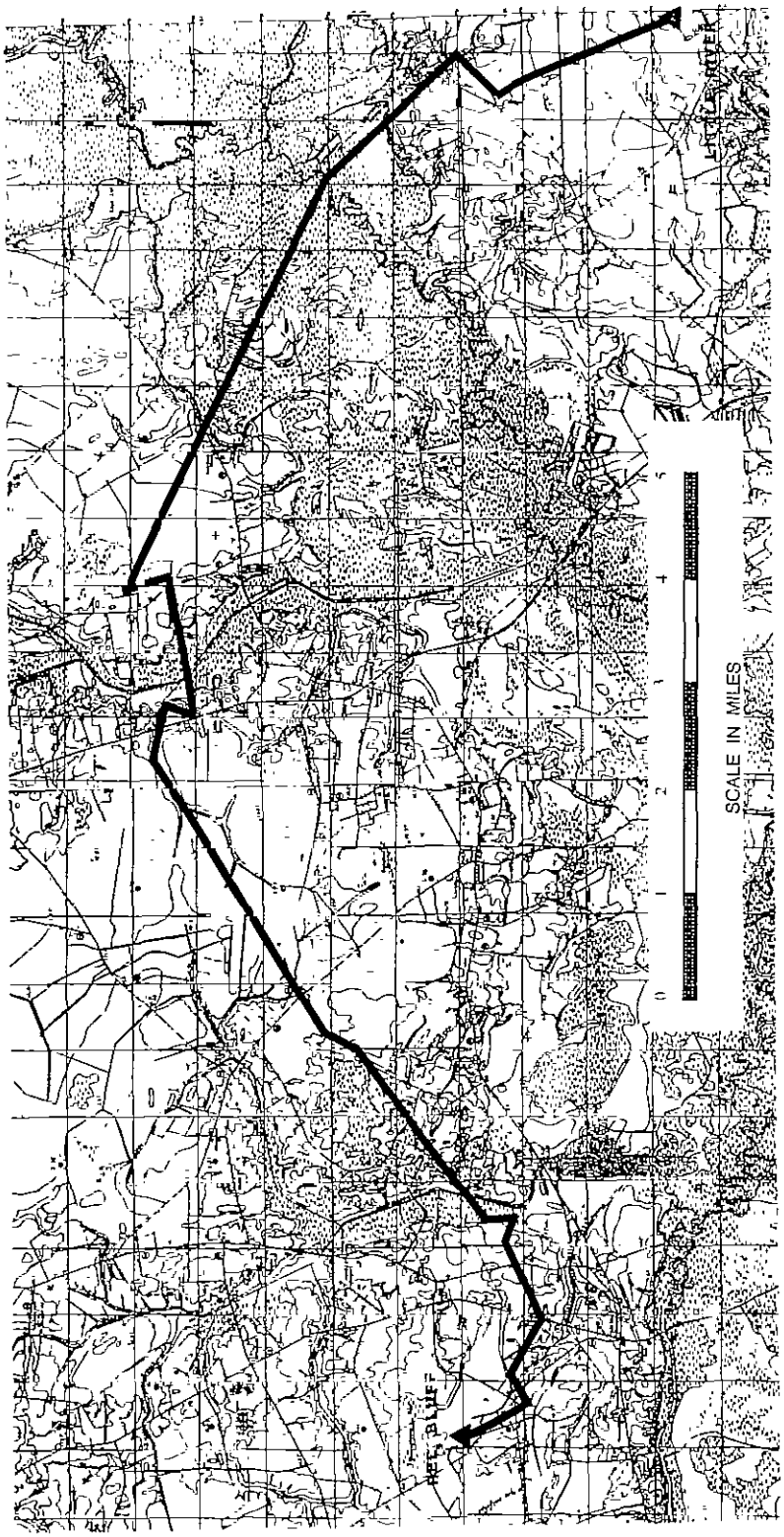

Figure 1. Location of project corridor on the Hammond and USGS Quadrangles.

counties.

The county is located in the lower coastal plain which is made up of marine or fluvial deposits that contain varying amounts of sand, silt, and clay (Dudley 1986). The soils were formed during the Pleistocene epoch, and several terraces were deposited in sequence from the lowest to the highest (Dudley 1986: 85). The study area contains the lower three terraces: Pamilico, Talbot, and Penholoway.

The Pamilico terrace ranges from sea level to 25 feet above sea level and makes up approximately 25 percent of the county. It runs along the flood plains of the Waccamaw River, Bull Creek, and the Little Pee Dee River, and southeast from the Intracoastal waterway to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Talbot terrace ranges from 25 to 42 feet above sea level and makes up about 20 percent of the county. It runs northwest from the Intracoastal Waterway to the Waccamaw River floodplains, from the North Carolina state border to South Carolina Highway 544 and includes the communities of Brooksville, Wampee, and Nixonville. Northwest of the Waccamaw and adjacent to its flood plains is an area underlain by the Talbot terrace. The Red Bluff, Shell, and Hickory Grove communities are found in this area.

The Penholoway terrace ranges from 42 to 70 feet above sea level and makes up about 20 percent of the county. This terrace is a narrow band in the central portion of the county and adjacent to the upper Little Pee Dee River flood plains to the North Carolina state boundary. Longs, Aynor, and Causey are communities found in this area (Dudley 1986: 85).

The general soil map for Horry County shows four soil groups as characterizing the corridor:

1) Eulonia-Bladen-Wahee: Moderately well drained, poorly drained, and somewhat poorly drained soils that have a loamy or sandy surface layer and a clayey or loamy subsoil. They are located on nearly level and gently sloping areas.

2) Yauhannah-Ogeechee-Bladen: Moderately well drained and poorly drained soils that have a loamy or sandy surface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil. They are located on broad, nearly level areas.

3) Yonges-Meggett: Poorly drained soils that have a loamy surface layer and a loamy or clayey subsoil. They are located in drainageways, on flood plains, and on nearly level areas.

4) Johnston-Rutledge: Poorly drained soils that are loamy

or sandy throughout. They are located in drainageways and on floodplains (Dudley 1986).

Fifteen percent of the corridor consists of very poorly drained Johnston and Rutledge soils; 46 percent consists of poorly drained Bladen, Hobcaw, Ogeechee, and Yonges soils; 6 percent consists of somewhat poorly drained Wahee and Yemassee soils; 30 percent consists of moderately well drained Centenary, Eulonia, and Yauhannah soils; and 3 percent consists of well drained Kenansville soils.

The geology of the coastal plain has been described by Cooke (1936). He notes that from the Cape Fear River in North Carolina to Winyah Bay in South Carolina, the coast forms a "great arc scooped out by waves" (Cooke 1936:4). In this area salt marshes are poorly developed or absent and few tidal inlets breach the coast (Smith 1933:20-21).

The vegetation in Horry County has been classified by Kuchler (1964) as part of the Oak-Hickory-Pine forest, based on potential natural vegetation. Floodplains are covered by mixed hardwoods, including bald cypress, tupelo gum, and black gum. Less water tolerant trees such as pines occur on uplands. Also found in the bottomlands, floodplains, and Carolina bays are red maple, ash, water oak, elm, and sweet gum. On the better drained uplands pine dominates, with loblolly and longleaf pines being indigenous and the slash pine introduced.

The topography of the corridor is gently rolling to nearly flat. Elevations range from 4 to 45 feet MSL.

Background Research

General accounts of Horry County history are presented by Drucker and Anthony (1980), Lewis (1970), Mills (1826), Quattlebaum (1954), Rogers (1972), and Trinkley (1983). Also , Mills (1825) shows the location of settlements in the early 19th century and gives a brief description of the Horry district in the 1820s (1826).

The earliest European activity in the Horry County area may have been the Spanish Ayllon movement from the Cape Fear River to San Miguel de Gualdape, 45 leagues away. Some have argued that the Fort may have been located at the mouth of Winyah Bay, although it has been more recently suggested that the fort was in Beaufort County, South Carolina or Chatham County, Georgia.

The earliest known settlement in Horry County was established around 1700 in the vicinity of the modern town of Conway. Most of these early settlers were small landholders since the county was unsuitable for any large scale plantation agriculture (Mills 1826). Other 18th century settlements were located near the mouth of

Little River and along the east bank of the Waccamaw River, on Waccamaw Neck. The Little River area economy relied primarily on lumber and naval stores as well as livestock, skins, diversified farming, and the production of rice and indigo (Berry 1970).

In 1731 Governor Robert Johnson directed the establishment of eleven townships, organized for defense against Indians and Spaniards. The Kingston Township was located within present day Horry and Georgetown Counties. In 1734 the town of Kingston was laid out in streets and grew into a major river port and commerce center. In 1801 the name of the town was changed to Conwayborough, which was later shortened to Conway (Mills 1826).

Kingston never became a parish itself, but remained as part of the Parish of Prince George, Winyah until 1785 (Rogers 1972:9). In 1768, South Carolina was divided into districts, and present day Horry County became part of the Georgetown District. This district was divided into four counties in 1785, one of which was Kingston County. In 1868 Horry County was established (Quattlebaum 1954).

Although Horry is a coastal county it developed very differently from Georgetown and Charleston counties. Horry District was isolated from South Carolina and had much stronger connections to North Carolina (Rogers 1972:3). The Waccamaw River was the major traffic artery, and it was not until the 1930s when the highway system developed that this reliance on river transportation changed. Most individuals were involved in subsistence farming in the early 1800s and farms were small, growing peas, wheat, rice, cotton, and corn, mainly for home consumption. Mills (1826: 583) notes that most of the people were small farmers and that there were very few skilled tradesmen. The Mills Atlas (1825) depicts the western side of the Waccamaw River in the vicinity of the study area as being very sparsely populated in the early 19th century (Figure 2). The Little River area is more densely occupied. The sparseness of houses in this area may reflect the subscription basis of Mills' Atlas. Horry District farmers may have been unable to subscribe or did not need to let others know their location (Trinkley 1983:6).

Only 20 percent of the land in Horry County is subject to the type of tidal overflow necessary for wet cultivation of rice, therefore the emphasis on subsistence farming seems to have resulted from topography. River floodplain soil was rich and productive, where it could be reclaimed from the swamp. The upland soils, however, were much less productive and had a light soil (Mills 1826: 581). Because the soils were unable to support plantation agriculture there developed a unique distribution of population and a very low percentage of slaves (Rogers 1972:12).

Following the Civil War, cotton and lumber became Horry County's chief products. Conway and Bucksport prospered as industrial and commercial centers, due to their location on the

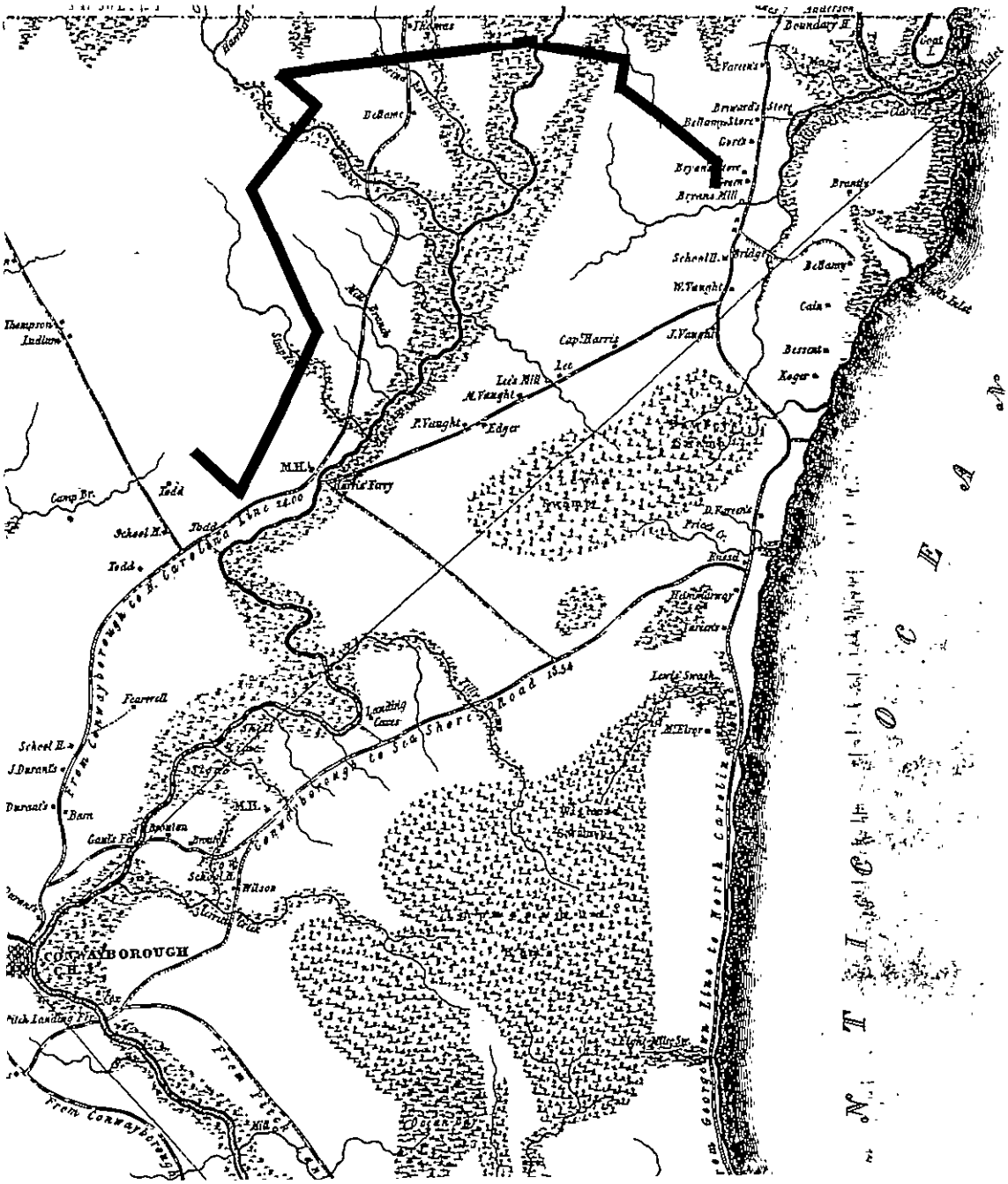

Figure 2. Mills' Atlas (1825), Horry District in project vicinity.

Waccamaw. The railroad system, the opening of remote areas of the county in 1887, and the accelerated production of tobacco during the 1890s helped to assure economic stability in the county (Lewis 1970).

Relatively little archaeology has been performed in the Horry County area. Previous archaeological investigations in Horry County are presented in Anderson (1975), Drucker and Anthony (1980), Englemayer (1979), Reinhold (1979), and Trinkley (1983). The project area contained no known sites listed in the Institute's files. Because of the generally poorly drained soils of most of the study area, it was believed that the project corridor had a low potential for containing archaeological sites.

Field Methods

The initially proposed field techniques involved the placement of shovel tests at 200 foot intervals, following South Carolina Department of Archives and History's suggestions, along the centerline of the corridor, with all fill being screened through 1/4 inch mesh. One transect was used since the corridor is only 30 to 100 feet wide, the centerline was marked, and the impact will be limited to the placement of triple powerline poles with excavations measuring about 2 feet in diameter. This testing interval was used because of the presence of poorly drained soils throughout most of the survey tract.

Should sites be identified by shovel testing, further tests would be used to obtain data on site boundaries, artifact quantity and diversity, site integrity, and temporal affiliation. The information required for completion of South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology site forms would be collected and photographs would be taken, if warranted in the opinion of the field investigators.

All soil would be screened through 1/4 inch mesh, with each test numbered sequentially. Each test would measure about 1 foot square and would normally be taken to a depth of at least 1 foot. All cultural remains would be collected, except for shell, mortar, and brick, which would be quantitatively noted in the field and discarded. Notes would be maintained for profiles at any sites encountered.

In the field it was noted that some areas labelled as wetlands or swamps had not been cleared, staked or marked. As a result, these areas were visually examined to verify their low relief and/or and the presence of standing water. Otherwise, the original plans were put into effect.

A total of 287 shovel tests in 34 transects along the centerline were excavated within the study corridor.

Laboratory Analysis

The cleaning and analysis of artifacts was conducted in Columbia at the Chicora Foundation laboratories on August 5, 1991. It is anticipated that these materials will be catalogued and accessioned for curation at South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. Field notes and photographic materials have been prepared for curation using archival standards and will be transferred to the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology as soon as the project is complete.

Analysis of the collections followed professionally accepted standards with a level of intensity suitable to the quantity and quality of the remains.

Results

The shovel tests and pedestrian survey did not identify any sites along the Red Bluff-Little River corridor. Two twentieth century trash dumps were noted: one consisting of several tin cans and a whiteware ceramic and the other consisting of two late porcelain ceramics, one whiteware ceramic, one plain amethyst glass fragment, and one amethyst glass fragment exhibiting a palmetto frond from a S.C. Dispensary bottle design. The production of these bottles lasted from 1893-1907 (Huggins 1971: v), therefore this scatter appears to date to the turn of the century. Both of these surface scatters did not appear to be associated with any nearby domestic sites.

Also found was one late twentieth century structure which had been pushed to the side of a ditch near the edge of a field. Visually noted was the presence of wire nails, pieces of plastic, and hard mortared bricks. Recovered in shovel tests were two wire nails, one animal vertebra, one 3-speed bicycle gear shift housing and two pieces of clear glass.

Summary and Recommendations

As a result of the archaeological survey of the Red Bluff-Little River transmission line, no archaeological remains clearly over 50 years in age were identified. The "loci" identified by these investigations appear to be very low density, isolated scatters of refuse. Although they *could* be characterized as "sites," we question the usefulness of treating these remains in this context.

Regardless, the remains identified are not recommended as eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, no further investigations are recommended by Chicora Foundation.

It is possible that archaeological remains may be encountered

in the survey tract during construction. Construction crews should be advised to report any discoveries of concentrations of artifacts (such as bottles, ceramics, or projectile points) or brick rubble to the project engineer, who should in turn report the material to the South Carolina State Historic Preservation office or to the client's archaeologist. No construction should take place in the vicinity of these late discoveries until they have been examined by an archaeologist.

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